

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A chat group system and method are provided that permit a wireless communications system based on an 802.11 protocol to implement an easy-to-use, multi-user, push-to-talk, instant communications functionality. The system maintains a reasonable system latency during the chat session while not excessively increasing the power consumption of the wireless communication devices of the 802.11 communications system. In order to decrease the packet load on the network, the system uses multicast packets to implement the feature wherever possible, with unicast packets required only at the beginning and end of each chat session, not at the beginning or end of each user's transmission.

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